

Application No.: 10/666,732

Docket No.: 2038-297

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (currently amended) An elastically stretchable nonwoven fabric, comprising:
elastically stretchable first fibers made of a first polymer and inelastically stretchable second fibers made of a second polymer; ~~[[,]] and said nonwoven fabric being characterized by that: said nonwoven fabric has first and second surfaces as viewed in its thickness direction, said first and second surfaces extending in parallel to each other,~~
intermittently distributed attaching areas in each of which at least one of the first fibers is attached to at least one of the second fibers; said second fiber is bonded to said first fiber at attaching areas formed intermittently along said first fiber
wherein
said second fibers are free of attachment to said first fibers outside said attaching areas; and spaced apart from said first fiber between each pair of said attaching areas neighboring to each other,
each segment of said second fiber extending spaced apart from said first fiber between each pair of two adjacent said attaching areas is neighboring to each other being longer than an associated segment of said first fiber extending between said adjacent attaching areas; [[,and]]
the number of said second fibers ~~[[fiber]]~~ is in a range of 1 to 16 per each first fiber; and
each of said first fibers has a cross portion comprising convex and concave portions alternately arranged in a circumferential direction of said cross portion, each said concave portion defining a bottom of a groove extending in a longitudinal direction of said first fiber.

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2. (currently amended) The nonwoven fabric according to claim 1, further comprising opposite surfaces, wherein said first ~~and second~~ fibers lie ~~intersect with each other in~~ such a manner that said first fiber lies inside and said second fibers lie ~~fiber lies~~ outside in one of said ~~first and second~~ surfaces.

3. (canceled)

4. (currently amended) The nonwoven fabric according to claim 1, further comprising opposite surfaces, wherein one of said ~~first and second~~ surfaces has a slip angle of 25° to 40°.

5. (original) The nonwoven fabric according to claim 1, wherein said first polymer is selected from the group consisting of thermoplastic polyurethane and thermoplastic polyurethane containing a lubricant and said second polymer is selected from the group consisting of polyolefin-based polymer and polyamide-based polymer.

6-10. (canceled)

11. (new) The nonwoven fabric according to claim 1, wherein said first polymer comprises thermoplastic polyurethane containing a lubricant; and said second polymer is selected from the group consisting of polyolefin-based and polyamide-based polymers.

12. (new) A nonwoven fabric, comprising:
elastically stretchable first fibers of a first polymer;
inelastically stretchable second fibers of a second polymer; and
intermittently distributed attaching areas in each of which at least one of the first fibers is

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permanently attached to at least one of the second fibers;

wherein each of the second fibers is attached to one of the first fibers multiple times in a plurality of said attaching areas arranged longitudinally of said first fiber, and a length of said second fiber extending between two adjacent attaching areas among the plurality of said attaching areas is greater than and detachable from a corresponding length of said first fiber extending between said two adjacent attaching areas.

13. (new) The nonwoven fabric according to claim 12, wherein a plural number of said second fibers are attached to each said first fiber in multiple said attaching areas arranged longitudinally of said first fiber.

14. (new) The nonwoven fabric according to claim 13, wherein each of said first fibers has a cross portion comprising convex and concave portions alternately arranged in a circumferential direction of said cross portion, and a number of said concave portions is equal to the plural number of said second fibers which are attached to said first fiber in multiple said attaching areas.

15. (new) The nonwoven fabric according to claim 12, wherein each of said first fibers has a cross portion comprising convex and concave portions alternately arranged in a circumferential direction of said cross portion, each said concave portion defining a bottom of a groove extending longitudinally of said first fiber.

16. (new) The nonwoven fabric according to claim 15, wherein said cross portion has the same number of said convex and concave portions.

17. (new) The nonwoven fabric according to claim 15, wherein said cross portion has at least three said convex portions and at least three said concave portions.

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18. (new) The nonwoven fabric according to claim 12, wherein said first polymer is selected from the group consisting of thermoplastic polyurethane and thermoplastic polyurethane containing a lubricant and said second polymer is selected from the group consisting of polyolefin-based polymer and polyamide-based polymer.

19. (new) A nonwoven fabric, comprising a plurality of conjugate fibers attached to each other in intermittently distributed attaching areas;

each of said conjugate fibers comprising an elastically stretchable first fiber of a first polymer and at least one inelastically stretchable second fibers of a second polymer in compatible with the first polymer, said first and second fibers being inseparable in said attaching areas and separable outside said attaching areas;

each of said conjugate fibers further comprising, between adjacent said attaching areas in which said conjugate fiber is attached to other said conjugate fibers, a split section in which the first and second fibers are separate from each other and in which a length of said second fiber is greater than a corresponding length of said first fiber.

20. (new) The nonwoven fabric according to claim 19, wherein each of said conjugate fibers further comprises, between adjacent said attaching areas in which said conjugate fiber is attached to other said conjugate fibers, at least a unsplit section which is adjacent one of said adjacent attaching areas and from which said first and second fibers branch.

21. (new) The nonwoven fabric according to claim 20, wherein each of said conjugate fibers has a plural number of said second fibers.

22. (new) The nonwoven fabric according to claim 21, wherein each of said first fibers has a cross portion comprising convex and concave portions alternately arranged in a

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circumferential direction of said cross portion,

a number of said concave portions being equal to the plural number of said second fibers,
each of said concave portions defining a groove extending longitudinally of said first fiber,
and

in said unsplit section, each of said second fibers being located in one of the grooves of the
first fiber.

23. (new) The nonwoven fabric according to claim 19, wherein each of said first fibers has a cross portion comprising convex and concave portions alternately arranged in a circumferential direction of said cross portion, each said concave portion defining a groove extending longitudinally of said first fiber.

24. (new) The nonwoven fabric according to claim 23, wherein said cross portion has the same number of said convex and concave portions.

25. (new) The nonwoven fabric according to claim 23, wherein said cross portion has at least three said convex portions and at least three said concave portions.

26. (new) The nonwoven fabric according to claim 19, wherein said first polymer comprises thermoplastic polyurethane containing a lubricant and said second polymer is selected from the group consisting of polyolefin-based polymer and polyamide-based polymer.